

VZCZCXRO4636
RR RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #2821/01 2931332
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
R 201332Z OCT 09
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5163
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0885
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RHMFISS/HQ USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002821

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/30/2024

TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: INCONSISTENCIES IN ARREST OF YEZIDI POLITICIAN

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Gary A. Grappo for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary. Outspoken critic of Kurdish security forces, Yezidi Progress Party (YPP) Head Wa'ad Hammad Matto was arrested by Iraqi military intelligence at his Ninewa home and continues to be held incommunicado. The warrant for his arrest was issued four days after his detainment. According to YPP members, Matto has been transferred to Baghdad and denied access to legal representation and all visitation rights. YPP members have traveled to Baghdad to raise Matto's arrest case with GOI officials in an effort to free Matto. It is unclear if the reason for his arrest is legitimate. YPP members allege that the KDP has orchestrated Matto's arrest to punish YPP for not joining with KDP in the upcoming national elections. Our intelligence sources suggest, however, his recent meetings with Baathist politicians in Syria may be the reason for his arrest. The Embassy will continue to gather additional information, monitor Matto's detention and raise his case with relevant GOI officials. End Summary.

BACKGROUND

12. (C) According to UNAMI Advisor Stephanie Koury based in Kirkuk, an officer of the 10th battalion of the 3rd Iraq Army arrested Yezidi Progress Party Head Wa'ad Hammad Matto in Ninewa on September 5. PRT Ninewa noted that one Iraqi Police officer was present at the time of arrest. The arrest warrant issued by Baghdad's Central Criminal Court is dated September 9, four days after his arrest. The warrant specifies that he is a suspect under Article IV of the Counter Terrorism Law No. 13 of 2005. Matto was transferred from Tal Afar to Baghdad. YPP members claimed that Matto was supposed to be arraigned on September 25 but this did not occur.

13. (C) Wa'ad Hammad Matto is a vocal opponent of heavy-handed Kurdish influence in Ninewa province. YPP member Saadi Batosh Qaro stated that this was Matto's first arrest though he has been subject to numerous threats by Military Intelligence agents in the past. Qaro reported that Matto has received assassination threats and warnings to disengage from UNAMI. Matto was arrested shortly after his second meeting with UNAMI. Qaro reported that Matto is being held at the Khadimiyah jail "5th Department" (Intelligence Unit) in Baghdad. Both Qaro and YPP member Bieb Khadida Khooji traveled to Baghdad to check on Matto but all attempts to gain access Matto have been unsuccessful.

APPEAL FALLS ON DEAF EARS

14. (S) Khooji indicated that YPP has published pleas in Ninewa's local press to draw attention to Matto's case. Qaro met with Judge Amir al-Shammari and Yezidi leader Baba Sheikh to ask for their intervention. Qaro claimed that appeals to

Ninewa Governor Atheel Alnujaifi and al-Hadba's Shaikh Abdullah did not produce results. (Note: According to military intelligence sources, Shaikh Abdullah paid YPP USD 20,000 for Matto's defense. End Note) Qaro said after presenting Matto's case to the Lawyers Union and UNAMI, they raised Matto's case with the following COR members who have yet acted to help: Amin Farhad Jeju al-Marwani of the Yezidi Movement for Progress and Reform- Osama al-Nujaifi of the Tawafuq coalition- Izz ad-Din Abdullah Husayn al-Dawla, a Tawafuq independent- Nur ad-Din Sa'id Musa al-Hayali of the Iraqi Islamist Party- Hamid Majid Moussa of the Iraqi Communist PartyYPP members stated that they did not raise Matto's case with Yezidi Prince Tahsin Beg because he is aligned with KDP. Qaro lamented that they cannot hire expert legal counsel due to lack of funds. Khooji pressed EmbOfs to pursue this case with GOI officials and find a way to get Matto visitation rights. .

REASON FOR ARREST?

15. (C) Khooji explained that Matto's computer was confiscated during the arrest. The computer contained all the personal information on all YPP members. In addition, the IA confiscated YPP's IHEC registration papers, without which, they claim, they are unable to participate in national elections. Khooji recounted that IHEC Mosul Office Head Mohammed Hani refused to provide duplicates of registration papers and told them to talk with IHEC at the national level. Khooji said that Hani is aligned with KDP and alleged that this is KDP's retaliation for YPP's refusal to join with the Kurdish Ninewa Fraternity List. Matto was a former KDP

BAGHDAD 00002821 002 OF 002

member. YPP is not affiliated with any other party or coalition. They know of other Yezidi leaders like Murad Kishto but do not collaborate with them. They have never publicly or privately made an alliance with KDP's political adversary, the al-Hadba party.

16. (S) According to our intelligence sources, this is not a Kurdish politically motivated arrest. Matto is being held for meeting with prominent former regime Baath Party official Muhammad Younis Jabour al-Ahmed and female Baath party member Su'ad Qasim Hasan in Syria. The Ministry of Defense generated the warrant and based on directions from higher ISF HQs, the 11th Brigade executed the arrest and the 10th Brigade has detained Matto.

COMMENT

17. (C) Without additional verifiable information, it is difficult to determine whether Matto's arrest was indeed politically motivated. Whatever the motive for Matto's arrest, the deficiencies in the process appear clear. Matto has been denied visitation rights and access to legal counsel. The Embassy will continue to monitor Matto's detention, put YRR members in touch directly with MoHR contacts and raise his case with relevant GOI officials.

FORD